

# *DFEH News Brief*

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## Governor Schwarzenegger Appoints Phyllis Cheng Director of Department of Fair Employment and Housing

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today announced the appointment of Phyllis Cheng as director of the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH).

"Phyllis is a tremendous asset to my administration. Her extensive background and knowledge in the field of civil rights and professional track record of protecting individuals who are discriminated against makes her the ideal fit for this position," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "I know the people of California will be well-served under her leadership."

Cheng has served as of counsel at Littler Mendelson, a national employment and labor law firm since 2007. From 2003 to 2007, she was a senior appellate court attorney to Justice Laurie D. Zelon, associate justice of the Second District Court of Appeal, Division Seven. Prior to that, Cheng served as a deputy attorney general in the civil rights enforcement section of the California Department of Justice where she represented state agencies and prosecuted violations of the Fair Employment Housing Act, Unruh Civil Rights Act, Ralph Act and other civil rights statutes from 1999 to 2003. Previously, Cheng was an attorney in private practice from 1995 to 1999. She was an associate at the civil rights and human rights firm of Hadsell & Stormer from 1993 to 1994. She also served as a two-term commissioner and vice chair of the California Fair Employment and Housing Commission from 1993 to 1999.

"I am eager to undertake this position so I can use my experience to again serve this great state and fulfill my commitment to public service," said Phyllis Cheng. "I look forward to applying my unique background in civil rights to upholding the primary mission of the department and ensuring that Californians are protected from discrimination."

Cheng, 55, of Valley Village, earned a Juris Doctorate degree from Southwestern University School of Law, a Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of Southern California and a Masters in Education and Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Los Angeles. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$136,155. Cheng is a Republican.

The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations, and from the perpetration of acts of hate violence. The department has jurisdiction over both private and public entities operating within California, including corporate entities, private sector contracts granted by the state and all state departments and local governments. DFEH receives and investigates discrimination complaints in its 15 district offices throughout the state. The department also routinely provides technical assistance to employers, business establishments and housing providers regarding their responsibilities under the law.



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